Dear Jim,

3/23/86

Thanks for the Kantor book. I'm taking it to the mail to read while I rest during therapy & because I'm going there later & so many people are telling me how great they are that I'm both & I'm not for info it. I read large & heavier books at home. I write this early morning to give you my early & unchanged thinking about Ruby in the event it can be of use to you (pl) in your thinking & how you spend your time. I'm still not typing because I've a crown & more stitches in the right wrist, due to be removed day after tomorrow when, I suppose, I'll get a report on the biopsy.

Regarding Ruby as part of a conspiracy presumes a) That the mafia killed JFK and b) That with all the professionals available to it the mafia would have used — and trusted — Ruby. Of course it also presumes that before JFK was killed that day the mafia knew this would happen & that Oswald would be captured & accessible. I regard none of this as likely.

Initially, these are the main reasons I spent less time, effort & space on Ruby. In addition, the nature & amount of information persuaded me that my time would be spent better if less of it were spent on him. After more than 20 years I know of no reason to doubt that judgment and I regard it as still true today.

Moreover, I didn't & today still don't believe that with all it had going for it the mafia would have risked killing JFK because of what getting caught would have meant to it and because at least in this country it never worked that way. The theory that it or anyone else killed JFK to stop Bobby's campaign again is both silly & untenable. There is nobody else who, e.g., would have had RFK's access to JFK or his determination to do something about the mafia. His likely successor would have been Katzenbach. Can you imagine him with such a drive, or anyone else? Or anyone who would have regarded, had he the drive & motive, his chances of doing any thing about the mafia as good? If the mafia had wanted to kill someone to stop Bobby it would have killed him. This also was much easier & much safer.

As I believe I once told you, Lil & I knew one of the top mafia capos before World War II. We knew him only socially & I can't remember ever being with him when he was not accompanied by one particular priest. This means nothing, about us, the priest or the others we knew who then knew him as we did or who we knew met him socially. In Ruby's case, his contacts that are alleged to connect him with the mafia all seem to have been in this initiation.

When I was in high school & in college it was common place for those of us who were not from well-off families to know those who in varying degrees were criminals, in my case Italians, Jews, Poles & blacks. Life was that way & for the most part those people could have survived no other way.

Call the case alleging connecting Ruby with the mafia — and this does not mean making a case that he was the mafia's assassin — is overwritten & exaggerated & requires acceptance of meanings & interpretations that are far from proven. While as a professional writer Kantor is more careful & is calmer in his writing, this is true of this book, too, up to p. 95, where I am. But he is, inventively, careless in this because for all his care & effort he cannot avoid it, and he tries to give unwarranted existing meanings in his statements/interpretations. A minor example is pretending that Ruby was not shocked by the JFK assassination/

when it had just happened (~~88~~) (85) but others were (88), with exactly the same reaction. I ~~forgot~~ noticed this yesterday morning. And on 85 you'll see an example of asking a question to convey what cannot be stated as fact (and obviously isn't) where, with regard to the Weissmans and the alleged JFK persecutors of "loyal Americans" Kantor asks "Were they (the lot of Americans) members of the underworld who had been under contracts to the CIA or the Teamster Teamsters racketeers who were bitterly opposed to the Kennedy administration?" Now we do know enough about Weissman et al to know that no such things were in their minds & the same is true of the Birchers who provided the money to pay the paper. This is just untenable, if not, really, dishonest, because the reader has no way, from Kantor, of knowing the unquestionable truth.

That there was a Ruby cover-up is an entirely different matter, it is without question, and I went into this in my first book, with Kantor himself as an example. I think it is clear that Kantor saw Ruby at Parkland & that the Commission was dishonest about that. The FBI, too, covered up on this as on so much else. So what else is new? And what does it mean other than that there was a cover-up?

There was a time, early on, when I believed that asking "~~Who~~ "cui bono" was a beginning point but as I learned more I realized that I was wrong. There are just too many who might have ~~seen~~ seen benefit in killing JFK.

Because there is no case that the mafia killed JFK - and ~~Hoffa~~ there can't be, there isn't & there can't be a case that Ruby killed Oswald for the mafia.

About 7 a.m. 11/24/63 Di just had breakfast & was sitting looking at the TV & I turned to Lil and said, "This son-of-a-bitch is going to be killed." She asked me why and I said that it seemed like every thing possible was being done to make it impossible to try him. From this I concluded that someone wanted to keep his mouth closed & from that I concluded that there is only one certain way - to kill him. (Because I did expect it, but not when & where it happened, perhaps I was more shocked than most when I saw it as it did happen.) So, I could, from the first, see a conspiracy to kill JFK & a conspiracy to kill Oswald & that they could be connected. I know of no reason not to consider this possible today. But not as the Blakeys & Billingses & Dr Kantors would have us believe (I've not read Blakey, either, for this reason) They put together flat-world cases. But they can't make the world flat because it isn't

Thanks & best,

Harold